

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

### Ralph's Wife .

In the quaint town of Banks Lancashire, nestled along the rugged coastline, a haunting tale echoed through the ages. It was a story that sent shivers down the spines of the townsfolk, especially during the dark winter nights when the winds howled and the sea roared with an unforgiving fury. This tale revolved around Ralph and his wife, a love story that transcended both time and death.

Ralph was a mysterious man, known to some as a smuggler and to others as a humble fisherman.

His ventures often took him far from the safety of the shore, venturing into treacherous waters.

One fateful day, Ralph set sail, promising his wife that he would return before the winter storms arrived. Little did he know that his fate was sealed, as the sea claimed him as one of its own.

Heartbroken by her husband's disappearance, Ralph's wife found solace in the belief that he would someday return. She never lost hope, clinging to the memories they shared and the love that bound them. Determined to guide her lost husband home, she would embark on a spectral journey, forever roaming the desolate path that became known as Ralph's Wife's Lane.

Legend had it that the ghostly manifestation of Ralph's wife could be seen during the darkest nights, her ethereal figure gliding silently from St. Stephens Church to Fiddler's Ferry. Clutching a flickering lantern in her hand, she searched the horizon, its warm glow casting an eerie light upon her ghostly visage. It was said that her sole purpose was to guide Ralph's spirit back to the safety of their home, should he ever find his way back from the watery depths.

As the townsfolk huddled around their fireplaces on those wintry nights, whispers of the haunting apparition circulated. Some claimed to have encountered her, catching glimpses of her translucent figure, clad in a tattered gown, her face etched with a melancholic longing. Others swore they heard her wailing cries carried on the wind, calling out to Ralph, begging him to return to her side.

Through the years, Ralph's Wife's Lane became a place of both fear and fascination. Visitors and locals alike would gather, hoping to catch a glimpse of the forlorn specter, to witness the undying love that bound Ralph and his wife even in death. Some brave souls even ventured to follow her ethereal path, only to find themselves lost in a maze of darkness, their voices swallowed by the haunting whispers of the night.

Generations passed, and the tale of Ralph's wife continued to weave its enchanting spell over the town. The legend became a symbol of eternal love, a reminder that some bonds could not be broken, even by death itself. Each winter, as the winds carried the scent of the sea, the townsfolk would recount the story of Ralph and his devoted wife, ensuring that their love story lived on.

And so, in the lonely hours of the night, when the moon cast its pale light upon Ralph's Wife's Lane, the ghostly figure would continue her ethereal journey. With her lantern guiding the way, she remained an ever-present sentinel, forever searching for her beloved Ralph, forever keeping the flame of their love alive.

For as long as the tale was told, Ralph's wife would walk, her spirit intertwined with the very fabric of the town. And maybe, just maybe, one day Ralph would find his way back to her, guided by the flickering light that led him home.

By Donald Jay